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WYLADY'S MONEY

By WILKIE COLLINS. AN ENG- IN THE LIFE OF A YOUNG GIRL

> PART THE FIRST. THE DISAPPEARANCE.

THAPTER XV. and it in silence, and turned to tempted to open it already," A to a groung your promise? Moody gently

met that objection with a woman's a latinise matter," she asked, "when or garanto a dirty, disreputable, presumme I worth like Mr. Sharon? It's a wonder matisma trust such a creature. 1

de de le him just as you do," Moody and there I when I first saw him in company with Me Iron But there was something in the nation of gave us at the first consultation which aftered my opinion of him for the beller I dislike his appearance and his maders as much as you do-I may even say Hell a shame i of bringing such a person to acted threselv in employing Mr. Sharon." land parened absently. She had somethere more to say, and she was considering question' she tegan.

"And ques on you like," Have you - She hesitated and looked embarras et Have you paid Mr. Sharon much mon y?" she resumed; sudden'y rallying her courage Instead of answering. Missly suggested that it was time to think of returning to Miss Pink's villa. "Your author may be getting anxious about you," he

Isalel led the way out of the firm house m slowe She reverted to Mr. Sharon and the money, however, as they returned by the path across the fields "I am sure you will not be offended with

me "she said, gently, "if I own that I am uneasy about the expenses. -I am allowing you to use your purse as if it were mine, and I have hardly any savings of my own." Mosely entreated her not to speak of it. "How can I put my money to a better use than in serving your interests? he asked. "My one object in life is to relieve you of your present anxieties I shall be the happlest man living if you only owe a moment's happiness to my exertions."

Isabel took his hand, and looked at him with grateful tears in her eyes. "How good you are to me, Mr. Moody!" she said "I wish I could tell you how deeply I feel your kindness." "You can do it easily," he answered, with

a smile "Call me 'Robert:' don't call me 'Mr. Moody,' She took his arm with a sudden familiarity that charmed him. "If you had been my brother I should have called you 'Robert,' she said: "and no brother could have been more devoted to me than you are." He looked eagerly at her bright face turned

mo to his "May I never hope to be something nearer and dearer to you than a brother!" he asked, timidly. She hung her head and said nothing. Mosdy's memory recalled Sharon's coarse reference to her "sweetheart." She had blushed when he put the question. What had she done when Moody put his question! Her face answered for her-she had turned pale; she was looking more serious than usual Ignorant as he was of the ways of women, his instinct told him that this was a had sign. Surely her rising color would have confessed it, if time and gratitude together were teaching her to love him? He sighed as the inevitable conclusion forced it-

self on his mind.
hope I have not offended you?" he said. "On no." "I wish I had not spoken. Pray don't think that I am serving you with any selfish

"I don't think that, Robert. I never conditionk it of you." He was not quite satisfied yet. "Even if you were to marry some other man," he went on earnestly, "it would make no difference in what I am trying to do for you. No

matter what I might suffer, I should still go on-for your sake Why do you talk so?" she burst out, passignately. "No other men has such a claim as yours to my gratitude and regard. How

can you let such thoughts come to you?' I have done nothing in secret. I have no frands who are not known to you. Be satished with that. Robert, and let us drop the "Never to take it up again?" he asked,

with the infatuated pertinacity of a man clinging to his last hope. At other times and under other circumstances Isabel might have answered him sharply She spoke with perfect gentleness

"Not for the present," she said. "I don't know my own heart. Give me time." He gratitude caught at those words, as the drowning man is said to catch at the proverbral straw. He lifted her hand, and satisfied and fond'y pressed his lips on it. She showed no confusion. Was she sorry for him, for wretch!-and was that all? they walked on arm in arm, in silence. smiling timidiv

Creating the last field they entered again on the high road leading to the row of villas in which Miss Pink lived. The minds of hath were preoccupied. Neither of them noticed a gentleman approaching on horselave lollowed by a mounted groom, He was a lyancing slowly, at the walking pace of his lower, and he only observed the two foot presengers when he was close to them. "Miss Isabelf"

She started, looked up, and discovered-Alfred Hardyman. He was dre sed in a perfectly made travelby sun of light brown, with a peaked felt hal of a darker shade of the same color, plan in a picturesque sense, greatly immoved his personal appearance. His pleasure at deservering Isabel gave the animation to his tenture, which they wanted on ordinary firsat his horse, a superb hunter, bird chives fitted h m perfectly. His obeden wrynt, on another magnificent horse, wanted behind him. He looked the impersunation of rank and breeding, of wealth and presperity. What a contrast, in a www.nan - eyes, to the shy, pale, melancholy man in the ill-fitting black clothes, with the wandering, measy glance, who stood beneath hand held left, and showed that he felt, his inferror position keenly! In spite of herself,

John wife out a visit to a relation." He looked

at Made while he was speaking. "Haven't

said ou beforef' he said, carelessly. "Yes;

At lady Lydrard's. You're her steward, are

you mild flow d'ye do?' Moody, with his

The dathe ground, answered silently by a

Hardyman, perfectly indifferent,

While Lady Lydiard's steward spoke or

the lingual on his saddle and looked admir-

at last, he went on, with a smile.

Miss Label again-

a label herself meets me at the road-

and to see you! You won't tell

May I ask you something else?—are

was no alternative before Isabel but

to surver this last question. Hardyman had met her out walking, and had no doubt

You saying in our neighborhood!

"I begin to think my luck

along to my farm and de-

wonder whether you are as glad to

work to be done for you, and the sooger I do it the better." She heard his excuse without heeding it. "You are not like yourself, Robert," she aid. "Why is it? What are you thinking of?" He was thinking of the bright blush that overspread her face when Hardyman first the transherous blush flew over Isabel's face, spoke to her; he was thinking of the invitain Marriy's presence, and with Moody's eyes tion to her to see the stud farm, and to ride distrustfully watching her, the roan mare; he was thinking of the utterly The is a piece of good fortune that I powerless position in which he stood toward harlly hope I for," said Hardyman, his cool, sabel and toward the highly born gentlequickened, as man who admired her. But he kept his man in label's presence. "I only got back doubts and fears to himself. "The train Iram France this morning, and I called on won't wait for me," he said, and held out his Lady Lydiard in the hope of seeing you. She hand once more. was not at home, and you were in the coun-She was not only perplexed, she was really tri and the servants didn't know the address. I nothing out of them, except that

distressed. "Don't take leave of me in that cold way!" she pleaded. Her i'v dropped tefore his, and her lips trembled a little. "Give me a kiss, Robert, at parting." She said those bold words softly and sadly, out of the depth of her pity for him. He started; his face brightened suddenly; his sinking hope rose again. In another moment the change came; in another moment he understood her. As he touched her cheek with his lips be turned pale again. "Don't quite for-

get me," he said, in low, faltering tones, and left her. Miss Pink met Isabel in the hall. Refreshed by unbroken repose, the ex-schoolmistress was in the happiest frame of mind for the reception of her niece's news. Informed that Moody had traveled to South Morden to personally report the progress of the inquiries, Miss Pink highly approved of him as a substitute for Mr. Troy. "Mr. Moody, as a banker's son, is a gentleman by birth," she remarked; "he has condescended in becoming Lady Lydiard's steward. What

drawn the inevitable inference, although he was too polite to say so in plain words. I saw of him, when he came here with you, prepossessed me in his favor. He has my confidence, Isabel, as well as yours; he is in "Yes, sir," she answered, shyly; "I am" staying in this neighborhood." every respect a superior person to Mr. Troy. "And who is your relation?" Hardyman Did you meet any friends, my dear, when proceeded, in his easy, matter-of-course way. "Lady Lydiard told me, when I had the

pleasure of meeting you at her house tha you had an aunt living in the country.

have a good memory, Miss Isabel for an

thing that I hear about you. It's your aunt

isn't it! Yes! I know everybody about

"A piece of good fortune that I hardly

hoped for," said Hardyman.

Isabel, still resting her hand on Robert's

arm, felt it tremble a little as Hardyman

made this last inquiry. If she had been

speaking to one of her equals she would have

known how to dispose of the question with-

out directly answering it. But what could

she say to the magnificent gentleman on the

stately horse! He had only to send his err-

ant into the village to ask who the young

lady from London was staying with and the

answer, in a dozen mouths at least, would

direct him to her aunt. She cas one ap-

pealing look at Moody, and pronounced the

"Miss Pink!" Hardyman repeated. "Surely

I know Miss Pink." (He had not the faint-

est remembrance of her.) "Where did I

meet her last?" He ran over in his memory

the different local festivals at which stran-

gers had been introduced to him.) "Was it

at the archery meeting, or at the grammar

school, when the prizes were given! No!

It must have been at the flower show, then.

It had been at the flower show. Isabel

had heard it from Miss Pink fifty times at

"I am quite ashamed of never having

called," Hardyman proceeded. "The fact is,

I have so much to do. I am a bad one at

paying visits. Are you on your way home?

Let me follow you and make my apologies

Moody looked at Isabel. It was only a

momentary glance, but she perfectly under-

"I am afraid, sir, my aunt cannot have the

Hardyman was all compliance. He smiled

and patted his horse's neck. "To-morrow,

then," he said. "My compliments, and I

will call in the afternoon. Let me see; Miss

Pink lives at-" He waited, as if he ex-

pected Isabel to assist his treacherous mem-

ory once more. She hesitated again. Hardy-

man looked round at his groom. The groom

could find out the address, even if he did not

happen to know it already. Besides, there

was the little row of houses visible at the

farther end of the road. Isabel pointed to

the villas, as a necessary concession to good

manners, before the groom could anticipate

her. "My aunt lives there, air, at the house

"Ah! to be sure," said Hardyman. "

oughtn't to have wanted reminding; but I have so many things to turns or at the tarm.

And I am afraid I must be getting old; my

memory isn't as good as it was. I am so

glad to have seen you, Miss Isabel. You

and your aunt must come and look at my

horses. Do you like horses? Are you fond

of riding? I have a quiet roan mare that is

used to carrying ladies; she would be just

the thing for you. Did I beg you to give my

best compliments to your aunt! Yes! How

well you are looking our air here agrees

with you. I hope I haven't kept you stand-

ing too long? I didn't think of it in the

leasure of meeting you. Good-by, Miss

He took off his hat to Isabel, nodded to

Isabel looked at her companion. His eyes

were still on the ground. Pale, silent,

motionless, he waited by her like a dog,

until she gave the signal of walking on again

to Mr. Hardyman? she asked, anxiously.

"You are not angry with me for speaking

He lifted his head at the sound of her

voice. "Angry with you, my dear! Why

"You seem so changed, Robert, since we

met Mr. Hardyman. I couldn't help speak-

They moved on towards the villa. Isabel

was still uneasy. There was something in

Moody's silent submission to all that she said

and all that she did which pained and humili-

ated her. "You're not jealous?" she said,

He tried to speak lightly, on his side. "I

She pressed his arm tenderly. "Never

fear, Robert, that new friends will make me.

forget the best and dearest friend who is now

at my side." She paused, and looked up at

him with a compassionate fondness that was very pretty to see. "I can keep out of the way to-morrow when Mr. Hardyman calls,"

she said. "It is my aunt he is coming to see,

. It was generously meant. But while her

mind was only occupied with the present

time, Moody's mind was looking into the

self-sacrifice already. 'Do what you think

right," he said, quietly; "don't think of me."

held out his hand to say good-by.

They reached the gate of the villa. He

"Won't you come in? she asked "Do

"Not now, my dear. I must get back to

London as soon as I can. There is some more

have no time to be jealous while I have your

affairs to look after," he answered.

Moody, and pursued his way to the farm.

sabel-good-by till to-morrow."

honor of seeing you to-day," she said.

least, and was obliged to admit it now.

personally to Miss Pink."

distinguished name of Miss Pink.

surely?"

stood it.

called The Lawn. '

toward the house.

should I be angry?"

ing to him, could It'

"Certainly not."

bere. What is your sunt's name!"

you were out walking?"

The answer to this question produced a species of transformation in M as Pink. The rapturous rank-worship of her nature feasted, so to speak, on Hardyman's message. She so to speak, on Hardyman's message. She looked tailer and younger than usual; she was all smiles and sweetness. "At last, Isabel, you have seen birth and breeding under their right aspect," she said. "In the society of Lady Lydiard you cannot possibly have formed correct ideas of the English aristocracy. Observe Mr. Hardyman, when he does me the honor to call to-morrow, and you will see the difference." you will see the difference." "Mr. Hardyman is your visitor, aunt, not

mine. I was going to ask you to let me re-main up stairs in my room." Miss Pink was unaffectedly shocked. "This is what you learn at Lady Lydiard's," she observed. "No, Isabel, your absence would be a breach of good manners; I cannot possibly permit it. You will be present to re-ceive our distinguished friend with me. And mind this," added Miss Pink, in her most impressive manner. "If Mr. Hardyman should by any chance ask why you have left Lady Lydiard, not one word about those disgraceful circumstances whi h connect you with the loss of the bank note! I should sink into the earth if the smallest hint of what has really happened should ten h Mr. Hardyman's ears. My child, I and towards you in the place of your lam nted mother. have the right to command your silence on this horrible subject, and I do imperatively command it. In these words foolish Miss Pink sowed the

seed for the harvest of trouble that was soon

CHAPTER XVI. Paying his court to the ex-schoolmistress on the next day. Hardyman made such excellent use of his opportunities that the visit to the stud farm took place on the day after. His own carriage was placed at the disposal of Isabel and her aunt, and his own sister was present to confer special distinction on

the reception of Miss Pink. In a country like England, which annually suspends the sitting of its legislature in honor of a horse race, it is only natural and proper that the comfort of the horses should be the first object of consideration at a stud farm. Nine-tenths of the land at Hardyman's farm were devoted, in one way or another, to the noble quadruped with the low forehead and the long nose Poor humanity was satisfied with second rate and third rate accommodation. The ornamental grounds, very poorly laid out, were also very limited in extent: and as for the dwelling house, it was literally a cottage. A parlor and a kitchen, a smoking room, a bedroom and a spare chamber for a friend, all scantily furnished, sufficed for the modest wants of the owner of the property. If you wished to feast your eyes on luxury you went to the stables. The stud farm being described, the intro-

The Hon. Lavinia Hardyman was, as all persons in society know, married rather late in life to Gen. Drumblade. It is saying a great deal, but it is not saying too much, to describe Mrs. Drumblade as the most mischievous woman of her age in all England. Scandal was the breath of her life; to place people in false positions, to divulge secrets and destroy characters, to undermine friendships and aggravate enmities-these were the sources of enjoyment from which this dangerous woman drew the inexhaustible fund of good spirits that made her a brilliant light in the social sphere. She was one of the privileged sinners of modern society. The worst mischief that she could work was ascribed to her "exuberant vitality." She had that ready familiarity of manner which is (in her class) so rarely discovered to be insolence in disguise. Her power of easy self-assertion found people ready to accept her on her own terms wherever she went. She was one of those big, overpowering women, with blunt manners, voluble tongues and goggle eyes, who carry everything be fore them. The highest society modestly considered itself in danger of being dull in the absence of Mrs. Drumblade. Even Hardyman himself-who saw as little of her as possible, whose frankly straightforward nature recoiled by instinct irola contact with his sister-could think of no fitter person to make Miss Pink's reception agreeable to her while he was devoting his own attentions to her niece. Mrs. Drumblade accepted the position thus offered with the most amiable readiness. In her own private mind she placed an interpretation on her brother's motives which did him the grossest injustice. She leli ved that Hardyman's designs on Isabel contemplated the most profligate result. To assist this purpose, while the girl's nearest relative was supposed to be taking care of her, was Mrs. Drumblade's idea of

Honorable Lavinia had redeeming qualities, and owned that a keen sense of humor was one of her merits. Was Miss Pink a likely person to resist the fascinations of Mrs. Drumblade? Alas for the ex-schoolmistress! Before she had been five minutes at the farm Hardyman's sister had fished for her, caught her, landed her.

"fun." Her worst enemy admitted that the

Poor Miss Pink! Mrs. Drumblade could assume a grave dignity of manner when the occasion called for it. She was grave, she was dignified, when Hardyman performed the ceremonies of introduction. She would not say she was charmed to meet Miss Pink-the ordinary slang of society was not for Miss Pink's ears -she would say she felt this introduction as a privilege. It was so seldom one met with persons of trained intellect in society. Mrs. Drumblade was already informed of Miss Pink's earlier triumphs in the instruction of youth. Mrs. Drumblade had not been blessed with children herself; but she had nephews and nieces, and she was anxious about their education, especially, the nieces. What a sweet, modest girl Miss Isabel was! The fondest wish she could form for her nieces would be that they should resemble Miss Isabel when they grew up. The question was as to the best method of education. She would own that she had selfish motives in becoming acquainted with Miss Pink. They were at the farm, no doubt, to see Alfred's horses. Mrs. Drumblade did not understand horses; her interest was in the question of education. She might even confess that she had accepted Alfred's inritation in the hope of hearing Miss Pink's views. There would be opportunities, she trusted, for a little instructive conversation on that subject. It was, perhaps, ridiculous to talk, at her age, of feeling as if she were Miss Pink's pupil, and yet it exactly expressed the nature of the aspiration hich was then in her mind. In these terms, feeling her way with the utmost nicety, Mr. Drumblade wound the net of fattery round and round Miss Pink, until her hold on that innocent lady was, in every sense of the word, secure. Before half the horses had been passed under review Hardyman and Isabel were out of sight, and Mrs. Drumblade and Miss Pink were lost in the intricacies of the stables. "Excessively stupid of me. We had better go back, and establish ourselves comfortably in the parlor. When my brother misses us he and your charming niece will return to look for us in the cottage." Under cover of this arrangement the separation became complete. Miss Pink held forth on education to Mrs. Drumblade in the parlor, while Hardyman and Isabel were on their way to a paddock at the farthest limits

of the property. "I am afraid you are getting a little tired," said Hardyman. "Won't you take my arm! Isabel was on her guard; she had not for gotten what Lady Lydiard had said to her.
"No, thank you, Mr. Hardyman; I am a

better walker than you think." Hardyman continued the conversation in his blunt, resolute way. "I wonder whether you will believe me," he asked, "if I tell you that this is one of the happiest days of my "I should think you were always happy,"

Isabel cautiously replied, "having such a pretty place to live in as this." Hardyman met that answer with one his quietly positive denials. "A man is never happy by himself," he said. "He is happy with a companion. For instance, I am happy with you."

Isabel stopped and looked back. Hardyman's language was becoming a little too explicit. 'Surely we have lost Mrs. Drumblade and my sunt? she said. "I don't

see them anywhere." "You will see them directly; they are only a long way behind." With this assurance he returned, in his own obstinate way, to his one object in view. "Miss Isabel, I want to ask you a question. I'm not a ladies' man. I speak my mind plainly to everybody-women included. Do you like being here to-

Isabel's gravity was not proof against this very downright question. "I should be hard to please," she said, laughing, "if I didn't enjoy my visit to the farm." Hardyman pushed steadily forward through the obstacle of the farm to the question of the farm's master. "You like being here?" he repeated. "Do you like me?"
This was serious. Isabel drew back a little and looked at him. He waited with the most impenetrable gravity for her reply. "I think you can hardly expect me to an-

swer that question," she said. "Why not!" "Our acquaintance has been a very short one, Mr. Hardyman. And if you are so good as to forget the difference between us. think I ought to remember it." "What difference?"

"The difference in rank." Hardyman suddenly stood still, and em phasized his next words by digging his stick

into the grass. "If anything I have said has vexed you." he began, "tell me so plainly, Miss Isabel, and I'll ask your pardon. But don't throw my rank in my face. I cut adrift from all that nonsense when I took this farm and got my living out of the horses. What has a man's rank to do with a man's feelings?" he went on, with another emphatic die of his stiek. "I am quite serious in asking if you like me, for this good reason, that I like you. Yes, I do. You remember that day when I bled the old lady's dog. Well, I have found out since then that there's a sort of incompleteness in my life which I never suspected before. It's you who have put that idea into my head. You didn't mean it, I dare say. but you have done it all the same. I sat alone here vesterday evening smoking my pipe—and I didn't enjoy it. I breakfasted alone this morning—and I didn't enjoy that. I said to myself, She's coming to lunch, that's one comfort-I shall enjoy lunch. That's what I feel, roughly described. I don't suppose I've been five minutes together without thinking of you, now in one way and now in another, since the day when I first saw you. When a man comes to my time of life, and has had my experience, he knows what that means. It means, in plain English, that his



Isabel had thus far made several attempts to interrupt him, without success. But when Hardyman's confession attained its culminating point she insisted on being heard. "If you will excuse me, sir," she interposed, gravely, "I think I had better go back to the cottage. My aunt is a stranger here, and she doesn't know where to look for us" "We don't want voor aunt." Hardyman remarked, in his most positive manner. "We do want her," Isabel rejoined. "I won't venture to say it's wrong in you, Mr. Hardyman, to talk to me as you have just done, but I'm quite sure it's wrong in me to

He looked at her with such unaffected surprise and distress that she stopped, on the point of leaving him, and tried to make herself better understood.

"I had no intention of offending you, sir." she said, a little confusedly. "I only wanted to remind you that there are some things which a gentleman in your position—" She stopped, tred to finish the sentence, failed, and began another. "If I had been a young lady in your own rank of life," she went on. "I might have thanked you for paying me a compliment, and have given you a serious answer. As it is I am afraid I must say that you have surprised and disappointed me. I can claim very little for myself, I know; but I did imagine so long as there was nothing unbecoming in my conduct—that I had some right to your respect."

Listening more and more impatiently. Hardyman took her by the hand, and burst out with another of his abrupt questions. "What can you possibly be thinking of?" he asked. She gave him no answer; she only looked

at him reproachfully, and tried to release Hardyman held her hand faster than ever.

"I believe you think me an infernal scoundrel," he said. "I can stand a good deal, Miss Isabel, but I can't stand that. How have I failed in respect toward you, if you please? I have told you you're the woman my heart is set on. Well? Isn't it plain what I want of you when I say that? Isabel Miller. I want you to be my wife!"

Isabel's only reply to this extraordinary proposal of marriage was a faint cry of astonishment, followed by a sudden trembling that shook her from head to foot. Hardyman put his arm round her with a

have been surprised to see in him. "Take your time to think of it," he said, you wouldn't have mistaken me, and you wouldn't be looking at me now as if you were afraid to believe your own ears. What marry you! I don't set up for being a saint ! When, I was a young man I was no better (and no worse) than other young men. I'm getting on now to middle life. I don't want romances and adventures: I want an easy existence with a nice lovable woman who will make me a good wife. You're the woman, I tell you again. I know it by what I've seen of you myself, and by what I have heard of you from Lady Lydiard. She said you were prudent and sweet-tempered and affectionate; to which I wish to add that you have just the face and figure that I like, and the modest manners and the blessed absence of all slang in your talk which I don't find in the young women I meet with in the present day. That's my view of it. I think for myself. What does it matter to me whether you're the daughter of a duke or the daughter of a dairyman! It isn't your father I want to marry; it's you. Listen to reason, there's a dear! We have only one question to settle before we go back to your aunt. You wouldn't answer me when I asked it a little while since. Will you answer now? Do you like me?"

Isabel looked up at him timidly. "In my position, sir," she asked, "have I any right to like you? What would your relations and friends think if I said Yes?" Hardyman gave her waist a little admoni tory squeeze with his arm.

"What! You're at it again? A nice way to answer a man, to call him 'sir,' and to get behind his rank as if it were a place of refuge from him! I hate talking of myself, but you force me to it. Here is my position in the world: I have got an elder brother; he is married, and he has a son to succeed him in the title and the property. You understand so far! Very well! Years ago I shifted my share of the rank (whatever it may be) on to my brother's shoulders. He's a thorough

good fellow, and be has carried my dignity or me, without once dropping it ever ince. As for what people may say, they have said it already, from my father and mother downward, in the time when I took to the horses and the farm. If they're the wise people i take them for, they won't be at be trouble of saying it all over again. No. o. Twist it bow you may Miss Isabel, whether I'm single or whether I'm married, I'm plain Alfred Hardyman; and everybody who knows me knows that I go on my own way and please myself. If you don't like me, it will be the bitterest disappointment I ever had in my life; but say so honestly, all the same."

Where is the woman in Isabel's place whose capacity for resistance would not have yielded a little to such an appeal as "I should be an insensible wretch," she redied, warmly, "if I didn't feel the honor you have done me, and feel it gratefully.

"Does that mean you will have me for

She was fairly driven into a corner; but

usband!" asked downright Hardyman

being a woman) she tried to slip through his fingers at the last moment. "Will you forgive me," she said. "if I ask for a little more time! I am so bewildered, I hardly know what to say or do for the best. You see, Mr. Hardyman, it would be a dreadful thing for me to be the cause of your giving offense to your family. I am obliged to think of that. It would be so distressing for you (I will say nothing of myself) if your friends closed their doors on me. They might say I was a designing girl, who had taken advantage of your good opinion to raise her-self in the world. Lady Lydiard warned me long since not to be ambitious about myself, and not to forget my station in life, because she treated me like her adopted daugh-ter. Indeed—indeed, I can't tell you how I feel your goodness and the compliment-the very great compliment—you pay me. My beart is free; and if I followed my own inclinations." She checked herself, conscious that she was on the brink of saying too much. "Will you give me a few days," she pleaded to try if I can think composedly of all this? am only a girl, and I feel quite dazzled by the prospect that you set before me."

ing all the encouragement that he desired to his suit. "Have your own way in this thing, and in everything!" he said, with an unaccustomed fervor of language and manner. "I am so rlad to hear that your heart is open to me. and that all your inclinations take my part. Isabel instantly protested against this misrepresentation of what she had really said: Oh. Mr. Hardyman, you quite mistake

Hardyman seized on these words as offer-

He answered her very much as he had answered Lady Lydiard when she had tried to make him understand his proper relations toward Isabel "No, no; I don't mistake you. I agree to

every word you say. How can I expect you to marry me, as you very properly re mark unless I give you a day or two to make up your mind! It's quite enough for Lydiard treated you as her daughter, why shouldn't you be my wife? It stands to reason that you're quite right to marry a man who can raise you in the world. I like you to be ambitious, though Heaven knows it isn't much I can do for you, except to love you with all my heart. Still, it's a great encouragement to hear that her ladyship's views agree with mine-"They don't agree, Mr. Hardyman," pro-tested poor Isabel. "You are entirely mis-

Hardyman cordially concurred in this view of the matter. "Yes! yes! I can't pretend to represent her lady-hip's language, o" yours either; I am obliged to take my words as they come to me. Don't disturb yourself; it's all right—I understand. You have made me the happiest man living. I shall ride over to-morrow to your aunt's house and hear what you have to say to me. Mind you're at home. Not a day must pass without my seeing you. I do love you, Isabel—I do indeed!" He stooped and kissed her heartily. "Only to reward me," he explained, "for giving you time to think."

She drew herself away from him—reso lutely, not angrily. Before she could make a third attempt to place the subject in its right light before him the luncheon bell rang at the cottage, and a servant appeared, evi-

"Don't forget to-morrow," Hardyman whispered, confidentially. "I'll call early, and then go on to London and get the ring."

CHAPTER XVII. Events succeeded each other rapidly after the memorable day, to Isabel, of the lun-

cheon at the farm. On the next day (the ninth of the month) Lady Lydiard sent for her steward and requested him to explain his conduct in repeatedly leaving the house without assigning any reason for his absence. She did not dispute his claims to a freedom of action which would not be permitted to an ordinary servant. Her objection to his present course of proceeding related entirely to the mystery in which it was involved, and to the uncertainty in which the household was left as to the hour of his return. On these grounds she thought herself entitled to an explanacion. Moody's habitual reserve-strength-

ened on this occasion by his dread of ridicule if his efforts to serve Isabel ended in fallure -disinclined him to take Lady Lydiard into his confidence while his inquiries were still beset with obstacles and doubts. He respectfully entreated her ladyship to grant him a delay of a few weeks before he entered on his explanation. Lady Lydiard's quick temper resented this request. She told Moody plainly that he was guilty of an act of presumption in making his own conditions with his employer. He received the reproof with exemplary resignation, but he held to his conditions nevertheless. From that moment the result of the interview was no longer in doubt. Moody was directed to send in his accounts. The accounts having been examined, and found to be scrupulously con rect, he declined accepting the balance of salary that was offered to him The next day he left Lady Lydiard's service. On the 10th of the month her ladyship re-

ceived a letter from her nephew. The health of Felix had not improved. He had made up his mind to go abroad again towards the end of the month. In the meantime he had written to his friend at Paris. gentleness which his oldest friend would | and he had the pleasure of forwarding an answer. The letter inclosed announced that the lost £500 note had been made the subject dropping back again into his usual quiet of careful inquiry in Paris. It had not been London one of their best men, well acquainted with the English language, if Lady Lydiard was desirous of employing him. He is there so very wonderful in my wanting to would be perfectly willing to act with an English officer in conducting the investigation, should it be thought necessary. Mr. Troy, being consulted as to the expediency of accepting this proposal, objected to the pecuniary terms demanded as being extravagantly high He suggested waiting a little before any reply was sent to Paris; and he engaged meanwhile to consult a London solicitor who had great experience in cases of theft, and whose advice might enable them to dispense entirely with the services of the French police. Being now a free man again, Moody was able to follow his own inclinations in regard

to the instructions which he had received from Old Sharon. The course that had been recommended to him was repellent to the self-respect and the sense of delicacy which were among the inbred virtues of Moody's character. He shrank from forcing himself as a friend on Hardyman's valet; he recoiled from the idea of tempting the man to steal a specimen of his master's handwriting. After some consideration he decided on applying to the agent who collected the rents at Hardyman's London chambers. Being an old acquaintance of Moody's, this person would certainly not hesitate to communicate the address of Hardyman's bankers if he knew it. The experiment, tried under these favoring circumstances, proved perfectly successful. Moody proceeded to Sharon's lodgings the same day with the address of the bankers in his pocketbook. The old vagabond, greatly amused by Moody's scruples, saw plainly enough that so long as he wrote the supposed letter from Hardyman in the third person it mattered little what handwriting was employed, seeing that no signature would be necessary. The letter was at once composed, on the model which Sharon had already suggested to Moody, and a respectable messenger (so far

as outward appearance went) was employed to take it to the bank. In half an hour the answer came back. It added one more to the difficulties which beset the inquiry after the lost money. No such sum as £500 had been paid, within the dates mentioned, to the credit of hardyman's account.

Old Sharon was not in the least discomposed by this fresh check. "Give my love to the dear young lady," he said, with his cus tomary im udence, "and tell her we are one degree nearer to finding the thief." Moody looked at him doubting whether be was in jest or in earnest.

"Must I squeeze a little more information into that thick head of yours!" asked Sharon. With this question he produced a weekly newspaper, and pointed to a paragraph which reported, among the items of sporting news, Hardyman's recent visit to a sale o horses at a town in the north of France. "We know he didn't pay the bank note in to his account," Sharon remarked. "What elso did he do with it! Took it to pay for the horses that he bought in France! Do you see your way a little plainer now! Very good. Let's try next if the money holds out. Someody must cross the channel in search of the note. Which of us two is to sit in the steamboat with a white basin on his lap! Old Sharon, of course." He stopped to count the money still left out of the sum deposited by Moody to defray the cost of the inquiry. "All right!" he went on 'I've got enough to pay my expenses there and back. Don't stir out of London till you hear from me. I can't tell how soon I may want you. If there's any difficulty in tracing the note, your hand will have to go into your pocket again. Can't you get the lawyer to join you! Lord! how I should enjoy squandering his money! It's a downright disgrace to me to have only got one guines out of him. I could tear my flesh off my bones when I think of it." The same night Old Sharon started for

France by way of Dover and Calais. Two days elapsed and brought no news from Moody's agent. On the third day he received some information relating to Sharon-not from the man himself, but in a letter from Isabel Miller. "For once, dear Robert" she wrote, "my judgment has turned out to be sounder then

yours. That hat fut old man has confirmed my worst opinion of him. Pray have him punished. Take him before a magistrate and charge him with cheating you out of your money. I inclose the sealed letter which he gave me at the farm house. The week's time before I was to open it expired yesterday. Was there ever anything so impudent and so inhuman! I am too vexed and angry about the money you have wasted on this old wretch to write more. Yours, gratefully and affectionately, "ISABEL,"

The letter in which Old Sharon had undertaken (by way of pacifying Isabel) to write the name of the thief, contained these lines: "You are a charming girl, my dear; but you still want one thing to make you perfect, and that is a lesson in patience. I am proud and happy to teach you. The name of the thief remains for the present Mr.

From Moody's point of view there was but one thing to be said of this-it was just like Old Sharon! Isabel's letter was of infinitely greater interest to him. He feasted his eyes on the words above the signature; she signed herself, "Yours, gratefully and affectionately." Did the last word mean that she was really beginning to be fond of him? After kissing the word he wrote a comforting letter to her, in which he pledged himself to keep a watchful eye on Sharon, and to trust him with no more money until he had honestly earned it first. A week passed. Moody (longing to see Isabel) still waited in vain for news from

France. He had just decided to delay his visit to South Morden no longer, when the errand boy employed by Sharon brought him this message: "The old un's at home and waitin' to see yer." Without the Instincts of Chivalry.

Col. Gunner, a merchant of Dallas, Tex. who was one of Emperor Maximilian's trusted friends in Mexico, says that the men the emperor did the most for proved to be the dogs that bit him the most brutally. There was the traitor Lopez. He was a brute without any of the instincts of chivalry. His horse was shot under him in battle and a cavalry soldier dashed through a heavy fire to his relief. Lopez jumped into the soldier's saddle and both rode off on the horse. Finding the weight too heavy, and to hasten his retreat, the scoundrel shot the soldier who had risked his life to save him. The act was reported to Maximilian, but he refused to believe it.-Exchange.

A Blank Book of Great Size. A Connecticut valley paper-making firm sent to the Paris exposition a blank book weighing 200 pounds and having 3,000 enormous pages, as a sort of universal autograph album. Only one fourth of its pages were filled in Paris, after which it served at a local fair, and last year was sent to New Orleans, where it was filled. It has now been returned to Holyoke, Mass., and will be exhibited. It contains 60,000 names, some well known.-Cincin-

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